

understand that this amendment has an impact upon our state of \$5.4 million. You will also see on your desk a little booklet that I had the Research Office prepare which set out the level of ADC payments historically and you will note that the booklet provides on page 5 the following information which I think is devastating, absolutely devastating. It says, under the current ADC payment level, if no increase in benefits are provided, in 1985 the purchasing power of the ADC program will have reached its lowest point since 1953, surpassing the previous low of 1973. Now the truth of the matter is this, colleagues, friends, it has been very easy for this great nation in society as it's going through its economic travails in the last ten years or the last five years in particular to forget about the children and the poor because the children don't vote and the poor tend to be relatively voiceless. And so what's happened is that we have permitted our children and our poor children in particular to continue to fall further and further behind the rest of society and that is the gospel truth. I don't think anybody in this body could quibble with that statement. So Senator Goodrich and Senator Chambers and I have decided that this is the year for the State of Nebraska to do right by our children and poor people by making certain that we increase the ADC program. While the level of increase is not what poor people in our society should have in terms of being able to meet basic needs for clothing and for food and for medicine and for shelter and for transportation and for child care and the other expenses that we all incur, nonetheless, it represents a renewed commitment of state dollars to the well-being of our lowliest and our neediest. I brought with me today from Omaha a book by Michael Harrington entitled The New American Poverty. It's a wonderful about the face of poverty in this country. There is even some references in this book to Nebraska. Michael Harrington points out in his book a study by the Congressional Budget Office which noted that if we have no income transfer programs in place, if we didn't have Social Security, if we didn't have ADC, if we didn't have food stamps, that the American economy would leave 25 percent of our nation broke. In other words, the kind of capitalistic free enterprise system that we have, while it provides benefits and wealth to about 75 percent of the American people, would leave 25 percent below the poverty guideline. And it is only the income transfer programs that we have that take the worst sting off of poverty and the worst sting off of the kind of economic